

**Information Paper**  
**Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)**  
**for Certain Combat-Disabled Uniformed Services Retirees**

**GENERAL:** Section 636 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, (enacted by Public Law 107-314, December 2, 2002) provides a new special compensation for certain combat-related disabled Uniformed Services retirees. The compensation is established in provisions set forth as a new section of title 10, United States Code -- section 1413a.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The new compensation became effective May 31, 2003, with benefits first available June 1, 2003. Payments began July 1. Payments for all approved applications, no matter when received, to the extent otherwise allowed in law and provided the applicant is otherwise qualified, will be retroactive to June 1, 2003.

**ELIGIBLE MEMBERS:** To be entitled to CRSC a retired member must meet a set of preliminary and final criteria. Applications are first screened to determine whether the applicant meets preliminary criteria. The Preliminary Criteria are:

1. Have 20 or more years of service for purposes of computing retired pay (equates to 7,200 points for non-regular retirees -- Reservists starting retired pay at age 60 ).
2. Be in a retired status.
3. Be entitled to retired pay, notwithstanding that such retired pay may be reduced due to receipt of VA disability compensation.
4. Have qualifying disability ratings (Percentages) of either 10% or greater for injuries if the member has been awarded a Purple Heart or a total combined VA disability rating of a least 60% otherwise.

Services will evaluate the disabilities of members who apply and meet the above Preliminary CRSC Criteria to ascertain whether the applicant meets the final CRSC criteria. Final CRSC Criteria are:

1. Have qualified disabilities associated with a Purple Heart and for which the VA is compensating the member at a 10% rating or higher, or
2. Have qualified combat-related disabilities that would carry a combined VA rating of 60% or greater.

**DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES:** Procedures and criteria to identify persons eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) benefits have been published and are available at <http://dod.mil/prhome/crsc.html>. Entitlement to CRSC is based on the criteria of 10 USC 1413a, as enacted, and described briefly in the description of eligible members below. An application for benefits is required using DD form 2860, which is available at the above site or directly at <http://www.dior.whs.mil/forms/dd2860.pdf>.

Each Department has established a CRSC review board to receive, evaluate, and process applications of their own retirees, with the Department of the Navy reviewing applications for both the Navy and Marine Corps. Services may be contacted toll-free at the following numbers:

Army:	1-866-281-3254
Navy and USMC:	1-877-366-2772
USAF:	1-866-229-7074

Service reviews will determine which disabilities, if any, are combat-related, including which disabilities, if any, are for an injury for which the member was awarded a Purple Heart. Combat-related disabilities include those that are the direct result of armed conflict, or that result from conditions that simulate combat, or that result from the performance of uniquely hazardous military duties, or caused by an instrumentality of war. Services will presume that disabilities

awarded VA disability compensation on service-connected exposure to hazards, which are clearly combat-related, are combat-related for purposes of CRSC. These include Agent Orange, Gulf War illnesses, Radiation Exposure, Mustard Gas, and Lewisite. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) will require documentation to support a determination of combat-related.

Retirees will be informed if their application is denied and the reason for denial and may reapply later if they are able to show they meet the program criteria or appeal the decision if they believe the Service incorrectly determined their qualification.

**CURRENT STATUS:** Services boards are operational and are receiving applications. The initial wave of calls and applications is causing a heavy workload for the boards but is expected to subside in the next few months. Applications are beginning to move through the system, but the length of time to get an approved application depends on when the application was received, the backlog and current volume of applications, and the quality applications in process.

**ESTIMATED COST:** We expect about 35,000 applicants will qualify for payments with a cost of \$327 million in FY 2004.

**APPLICATION TIPS:** Applicants should bear in mind that the Service is attempting to classify the origin of the disability. They need to have documents that go to the heart of that issue. We have three suggestions to improve the quality of an application.

1. Be careful to classify disabilities as awarded by the VA. A retiree who does not have this information should contact the VA regional office and request a listing of their disabilities by VASRD code (VA Schedule of Rating Disabilities). The VA has notified regional offices to expect and support such requests. The VA has been very helpful to DoD and the two Departments are working closely to achieve an effective flow and exchange of information needed to operate the CRSC program.
2. Especially for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a retiree should try to find and submit a copy of the first VA rating decision on the disability that shows the basis of the award. More recent ratings may show only that the disability has been increased in percentage with no information about the origin of the disability or basis of the award.
3. Retirees should avoid submission of unrelated documents. The retiree should try and provide only those supporting documents that deal with qualifying conditions. This is especially true for medical records. The review board may find it difficult to document a combat disability if the retiree sends in every medical record he/she can find, forcing the board to look through colds and flu, sports injuries, and upset stomachs.